



# Legislative Edition

## Budget clears subcommittee

By Bob Anez  
 Communications Director

The legislative subcommittee reviewing the Department of Corrections proposed budget completed its work Jan. 26, after cutting \$13.2 million from the spending requested to maintain or expand capacity in the corrections system.

The reduction was based on the panel's 4-2 decision to adopt a 5 percent annual growth in overall offender population for the next two years, instead of the department's projected increase of 7 percent in fiscal year 2008 and 8 percent in 2009. That means the budget would accommodate a total two-year increase of 1,292 offenders, or 681 fewer than the department has forecast.

Corrections Director Mike Ferriter expressed concern that the action of the Joint Appropriations Subcommittee on Corrections and Public Safety will affect the department's ability to have enough beds for the number of offenders expected.

Sen. Keith Bales, a subcommittee member, said he supported the lesser budget because he believes the new programs launched by the department in recent years should begin to have the anticipated effect on recidivism and slow the growth in offenders beyond what the agency projects.

"If that is truly the case and we have had those programs in place for years, we don't have to fund at 8 percent

(growth)," said the Republican from Otter. "I hope the department programs bear fruit."

Ferriter said he hopes Bales is correct. "I truly want to believe that the programs will make a difference," he told the subcommittee. "But I'm concerned about having the number of beds needed to address public safety."

Bales acknowledged that if he's wrong and the budget is too small to handle the increase in offenders sent to corrections, the department will have to request a supplemental appropriation two years from now to keep its budget in the black.

Those voting for trimming the budget request were Bales; Reps. Ray Hawk, R-Florence, and Bill Beck, R-Whitefish; and Sen. Steve Gallus, D-Butte. Sen. Trudi Schmidt, D-Great Falls, and Rep. Cindy Hiner, D-Deer Lodge, opposed the move.

Gallus explained his vote was a one of practicality, rather than an endorsement of the lower spending level. Had he opposed the reduced funding, the subcommittee – evenly divided between Democrats and Republicans – could have stalemated over adding any more to the budget, he said.

Gallus said the subcommittee's vote would leave the department underfunded, something that has consistently

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Sen. Bales



Rep. Beck



Sen. Gallus



Rep. Hawk



Rep. Hiner



Sen. Schmidt

# Budget

FROM Page 1

happened to the agency in previous legislative sessions. The agency bears the brunt of inadequate funding because it has no choice but to accept the offenders committed to it by court orders, he said.

Ferriter said the subcommittee's work is just the first step in the budget-setting process that will continue until the Legislature adjourns in late April. The next step will find all agency budgets before the House Appropriations Committee, probably in

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Your support has been  
clear in your actions."***

***-- Mike Ferriter***

early March after lawmakers return from their mid-session break.

For now, Ferriter said, the subcommittee deserves thanks for its work.

"You listened to us," he told the six members after their final vote. "You understand what we do in adult and juvenile corrections. Your support has been clear in your actions."

Beck, who noted he has prior knowledge about corrections from when he was director of public safety for police, fire and corrections agencies in the District of Columbia, said, "We tried to be as fair as we could" in assessing the department's budget.

He said the decision to adopt a lower growth forecast for offenders was not a matter of the subcommittee believing the department inflated its request simply because the state has a large budget surplus. GOP leaders gave subcommittees guidance for decreasing budget requests and the sub-

committee had to consider those, Beck said.

Like Bales, he said he recognized the potential for the department to run short and need to request additional money

from the next Legislature. "Supplementals are a fact of life," he said.

Gallus and Beck said they would not fault the department should it need to ask for such funding.

The \$13.2 million cut came in a package of proposals seeking \$53 million to fund prerelease center beds added over the past two years, cover the cost of two new methamphetamine treatment centers containing a total of 120 beds, and pay for continuation of the START (Sanction, Transition, Assessment, Revocation and Treatment) center at Warm Springs. The money also would pay for placement of offenders in drug treatment programs and a felony DUI treatment program, and creation of a new 80-bed prerelease center in Northwestern Montana.

About \$16.1 million of the \$39 million balance is earmarked for:

- moving the 144-bed Missoula Assessment and Sanction Center (MASC) to a new facility and using its current home as a regional prison
- staffing and operating a 150-bed expansion of the work dorm at Montana State Prison
- opening a 50-bed work dorm at Montana Women's Prison
- putting 60 more inmates in an expansion of the regional prison at Glendive
- contracting for creation of a 200-bed sex offender treatment center.

The department had requested \$20.8 million for those five projects, or about \$4.7 million more than was approved by the subcommittee.



Ferriter

In taking final action on the department budget, the subcommittee also approved rate increases for those operating the regional prisons, MASC and Crossroads Correctional Center at Shelby. (See story on Page 10.)

Before the subcommittee's final day of work on the corrections budget, it had approved every proposal submitted by the agency. The following is a list of what was adopted by the subcommittee.

## **1. Administration and Support**

***Ongoing:***

- \$1.7 million to pay the costs of contracted secure beds (regional and private prisons, county jails)
- \$948,440 for renting space in a new building for central office staff
- \$551,363 to hire four additional information technology staff
- \$300,785 to cover inflationary increases in outside medical costs
- \$300,000 for upgrading information technology programs
- \$158,362 for a behavioral health facilitator to coordinate mental health programs between corrections and the Department of Public Health and Human Services
- \$150,202 in supervision and restitution fees to hire two additional staff to collect this money
- \$122,072 for expanding video conferencing capability for inmate court appearances
- \$110,471 to hire a registered nurse as a managed care specialist
- \$20,000 for operating an electronic storage and workflow system allowing for entire of-

# New era for women's corrections

Opening of the Passages facility in Billings this month marked the arrival of a new era in Montana corrections.

Passages, located in the former Howard Johnson Express Inn, combines three community-corrections programs into the single building and has a capacity of 155 women offenders. The first 30 women – 21

from the nearby Montana Women's Prison and nine from area county jails – arrived Jan. 19.

They moved into rooms on the third floor, which is the site of the 40-bed substance-abuse treatment program.

The first floor, scheduled to be ready for occupancy Jan. 26, houses the 65-bed prerelease center. The second floor, expected to open by the end of March, will be the new home of the 50-bed Billings Assessment and Sanction Center (BASC). It had been located at the women's prison.

Passages is operated by Alternatives Inc., which also runs the Billings prerelease center for men, called Alpha House. Alternatives purchased the 80,000 square-foot Howard Johnson motel for about \$5 million last year and renovated it for use as a correctional facility.

The opening will relieve pressure on the women's prison and make room for expansion of the industries program there. Also, Alpha House will have space for housing another 25 male offenders.

"We've had complete cooperation from the (Yellowstone County) jail and the prison," Dave Armstrong, administrator of the nonprofit Alternatives, said of the initial move of inmates in mid-January. "Movement has been remarkably peaceful and organized."

He said the first women entering Passages understand they play a crucial role in the success of the facility.



The former Howard Johnson Express Inn in Billings houses the Passages programs.

"The women realize they are role models for future offenders and it's up to them to make the program run smoothly," Armstrong said.

Corrections Director Mike Ferriter said Passages will forever alter the face of programs for women offenders in Montana.

"We should see one of the most dramatic changes in female corrections," he said. "I doubt if there's another system in the United States that offers what we do in one building."

Ferriter said the location of Passages near the women's prison and the Billings probation and parole office is a big plus, because it will result in "seamless communication" among all the programs.

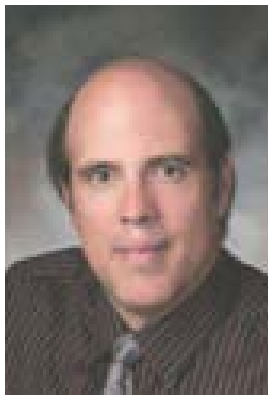
For the first two or three months, meals for offenders at Passages will be provided by the women's prison, Armstrong said. But once the new kitchen is installed at Passages, the facility will supply its own meals as well as those for the men's prerelease center, he added.

The Passages kitchen eventually will produce about 900 meals a day while teaching culinary skills to the offenders, Armstrong said.

About 60 employees will work at Passages, including the administration of Alternatives.

Jan Begger, who had been BASC liaison for Alternatives, is director of Passages.

Created in 1980, Alternatives has operated residential and non-residential supervision and treatment programs for state and federal inmates in Yellowstone, Carbon and Stillwater counties.



Armstrong



# Lawmakers' tour looks at STEP plan

By Bob Anez  
Communications Director

About 45 legislators, legislative staffers and key officials from three state agencies participated in tour of buildings and programs that would be involved in a new initiative to offer more appropriate treatment for mentally ill offenders.

The tour, conducted following the first week of the 2007 Legislature, included stops at housing units in Montana State Prison that hold inmates with mental health problems, the Montana State Hospital and two nearby buildings that would be affected by implementation of STEP.

The acronym stands for Secure Treatment and Examination Program. It is the product of a collaborative effort between the Department of Corrections and the Department of Public Health and Human Services.

STEP would be housed in the state hospital's former forensic unit, which has been home to the felony DUI treatment program known as WATCH. That program would move to the old receiving hospital a few hundred yards away on the Warm Springs campus.

Under the proposal, which requires legislative approval and funding, 60 inmates with the most severe mental health problems would be moved from Montana State Prison and the Montana Women's Prison to STEP. In addition, 60 patients who have been adjudicated as guilty but mentally ill would be moved from the state hospital.

The tour included members of three joint subcommittees that will deal with various aspects of the STEP proposal.



Deputy Warden Ross Swanson, far right, conducts a tour of a housing unit that holds mentally ill inmates at Montana State Prison.

Most members of the Corrections and Public Safety, Health and Human Services, and Long-range Planning subcommittees attended. Staffers for those committees, representatives from the Architecture and Engineering Division in the Department of Administration, and top officials from Corrections and Public Health also participated.



Matteucci

Because of the large number of people on the tour, the group used a chartered bus. Deb Matteucci, behavioral health program facilitator, provided information and answered questions from tour members during the bus trip.



Ed Amberg, administrator of Montana State Hospital, talks to legislators and others during a tour of the facility.

The daylong tour began with a stop at the housing units at the state prison where inmates with mental health problems live. Stops at the WATCH facility, the state hospital and the old receiving hospital followed.

The tour allowed lawmakers and the others to see how mentally ill offenders are managed at the prison and hospital, the scope of renovation needed at the old receiving hospital and the condition of the building that

# STEP

FROM Page 4

would house STEP.

Montana State Prison Warden Mike Mahoney told the group that STEP would be "truly the first program that will address the needs of mentally ill offenders in the state of Montana."

The proposal recognizes how difficult it is for mentally ill inmates to survive in a prison environment while coping with the problems of their mental health, he said. Prison officials estimate 30 percent to 40 percent of inmates are on psychotropic medica-

tion or have some mental health problem.

Paul Bence, a mental health technician at the prison, said the goal is to stabilize those inmates so they can move into the general prison population. Even then, he said, officials continue to monitor the inmates to make sure they don't relapse.

Those on the tour heard from two inmates in the mental health unit.

Sean Fournier said he had thought there was no hope when he arrived at the prison, but therapists worked with him and restored his hope. "They saved my life," he said.

He said he had been unaware of mental illness symptoms or the ser-

vices available in the community. Eligible for parole in May, Fournier told the group, "I want to be successful like you some day."

Mahoney said the prison has greater difficulty hiring staff than would STEP because the new program will be outside the double wire of the prison and offer a hospital-like setting.

Matteucci told the legislators that STEP would be divided into four distinct units and she referred to the plan as a "cutting-edge proposal" that has attracted attention from other states.

Corrections Director Mike Ferriter said STEP is another example of his agency's move toward more specialized care to meet individualized needs of offenders. He said it is a further recognition that one size doesn't fit all when it comes to offenders.

"This is a starting point," Matteucci said. "How it will and where it will grow will be worked on by the two departments."

Ed Amberg, administrator of the state hospital, said STEP is not the "be-all and end-all" when it comes to serving the mentally ill, but it does address a serious problem with one segment of that group.

"This provides safety and security," he said of the proposal. "It moves in the direction of doing something meaningful while they are incarcerated."

Amberg predicted no problems in staffing STEP. "People know we provide excellent mental health care and they want to be part of that team," he said.



Lawmakers, joined by public health and corrections officials, tour the old receiving hospital at Warm Springs.

## Department hires new federal grants coordinator

Dave Kirkpatrick was recently hired to coordinate federal grants for the Montana Department of Corrections.

A member of the Budget and Program Planning Bureau, Kirkpatrick will coordinate grant writing efforts for the department and will manage new and existing grants.

Kirkpatrick, a Livingston native, was most recently employed in Helena by CDM Inc., as a



Kirkpatrick

marketer and proposal writer. CDM is an engineering consultant and design firm that specializes in environmental remediation projects, as well as public water and wastewater treatment facilities.

A graduate of the University of Montana School of Journalism, Kirkpatrick has worked as a writer and editor for a number of employers during the last 18 years. He is married to Dr. Tina Kirkpatrick. The two have a 3-year-old daughter, Grace.



## Daily meetings cover the bases

# Department monitors session

**By Bob Anez**  
**Communications Director**

Every day at 1 p.m. since Jan. 3, a group of Corrections Department staff meets in a conference room. The topic of discussion is the biennial lawmaking process called the Legislature.

The meetings, usually lasting an hour, review upcoming hearings involving bills of interest to the agency and other measures related to correctional programs that are elsewhere in the legislative process. The timing of the meetings coincides with the daily floor sessions of the House and Senate.

Of special interest at each gathering are four bills requested by the department. All fared well early in the session.

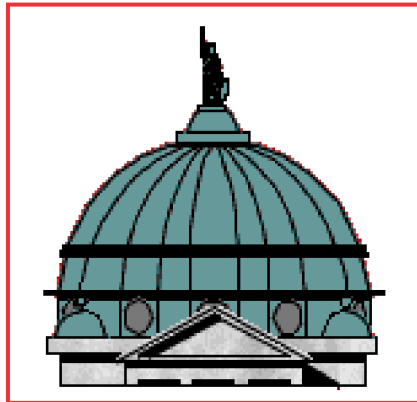
One modifies the law regarding medical parole to give the Board of Pardons and Parole a little more flexibility in deciding which infirm inmates to release because of their medical condition. The House approved that bill overwhelmingly.

Another measure, which already has passed the Senate, prohibits probation and parole officers from having sexual contact with an offender.

A third bill, approved unanimously by the Senate, overhauls the Juvenile Delinquency Intervention Program, or JDIP. Senate Bill 146 also is supported by the judicial branch.

The fourth measure is probably the most sweeping. It would create a new program to provide a more appropriate setting for treatment of mentally ill offenders. Called the Secure Treatment and Examination Program (STEP), the proposal would treat 60 prison inmates with the most severe mental health disorders and 60 patients from the Montana State Hospital who had been judged guilty of a crime but mentally ill.

STEP marks the first major collaboration between the departments of Corrections and Public Health and Human Services. It also represents a significant effort to change the way mentally ill offenders are treated while in custody of the state hospital and



prisons.

The program would be housed in the former forensic unit once used by the state hospital at Warm Springs. It would combine the treatment expertise of the public health agency and the security skills of the Corrections Department.

Success of the proposal initially depends on three committees.

The Joint Appropriations Subcommittee on Health and Human Services will decide on funding for the project in February.

The Senate Human Services Committee held a hearing Jan. 29 on the bill that actually creates the program.

The Joint Appropriations Subcommittee on Long-Range Planning scheduled a Jan. 31 hearing on funding for renovation of the building to house STEP and of a nearby structure that would accommodate the treatment program now in that building.

Some of the other bills being monitored by the department in the opening weeks of the legislative session include ones that:

- Provide \$27 million to offset a funding shortage in the department's current budget
- Require the department to pay \$6 million more a year for offenders held in county jails
- Toughen restrictions on where sex offenders can live
- Increase the penalties for sex offenders
- Finance increased training opportunities for inmates at Montana Women's Prison
- Prohibit criminals from profiting from their crimes
- Change laws on parole revocation
- Increase the amount of money inmates receive when released from prison

The daily meetings also include discussion of the status of the department's proposed budget, the need to contact certain legislators about pending bills and responses to lawmakers' request for information on corrections. The group also talks about positions the department will take on bills.

Those attending the meetings regularly include Director Mike Ferriter; Steve Gibson, administrator of the Youth Services Division; Rhonda Schaffer, administrator of the Administrative and Financial Services Division; Gary Hamel, administrator of the Health, Planning and Information Services; Steve Barry, Human Resources Division administrator; and Pam Bunke, administrator of the Adult Community Services Division.

Montana State Prison Warden Mike Mahoney, Montana Women's Prison Warden Jo Acton; Gayle Lambert, administrator of Montana Correctional Enterprises; Sally Hilander, victim information specialist; and Deb Matteucci, behavioral health program facilitator, also participate in person or by phone.

# New statistician added to IT staff

Jordan Carroll-Larson joined the Department of Corrections as a statistician in January, providing a key addition to the information technology staff.

Carroll-Larson, 24, played a vital role almost immediately in helping prepare the response to a legislative request to use a revised method for projecting

the institutional offender population. He works with Dewy Hall, statistics and data quality manager, and Mark Johnson, lead statistician.

In his job, Carroll-Larson is expected to work on data management and quality control, statistical analyses, and trend forecasting on such issues as offender population, recidivism and treatment programs.

A fourth-generation Mon-

tanan, Carroll-Larson is a native of Missoula and obtained a bachelor's degree in economics from the University of Montana in 2004. He earned a master's degree in natural resources and development economics from Utah State University in 2006.

His primary research involved a variety of resource and environmental issues. He published studies on the state of the Pacific Coast groundfish fishery, oil drilling and exploration in Utah.

Carroll-Larson worked as a network/computer technician while at UM and as a statistics instructor at Utah State. During the summer of 2006, he was an economist intern with the Natural Resources Defense Council in San Francisco.

He and wife, Rachel, have two dogs.

## CBN features dog program

The Christian Broadcasting Network recently used its Web site to feature the Prison Paws for Humanity dog-training program at Montana Women's Prison.

The story and video, drawn from a Billings TV station's coverage of the program, said it is changing lives by teaching inmates tolerance, patience and how to deal with frustration.

"The inmates that have participated in the program say it gives them a purpose," the article said. "And in the process, the inmates are being taught skills they need to live outside the walls of their prison."



## Message from the Director

**Mike Ferriter**

Although corrections is about public safety and human lives, the Department of Corrections is often viewed in terms of population and how we manage numbers.

Crimes committed and years sentenced determine the number of offenders, and the number of offenders drives budget needs. The number of beds dictates the capacity of correctional facilities, and the number of probation and parole officers affects how many offenders can be supervised in the community.

But there are less visible numbers that impact the department and the offenders it manages.

They are the lists of offenders waiting for room to become available in various programs limited in their ability to accommodate more. Those on the list reflect a system where the flow of offenders has been stalled by lack of capacity. The result is offenders backed up in other programs as they wait their turn to move on and move closer to the day where they will get out of the corrections system and off supervision.

At one point in mid-January, 370 inmates in Montana prisons and at the Missoula Assessment and Sanction Center were waiting for vacancies in the six prerelease centers.

At the same time, the corrections system had 77 offenders waiting for room in WATCH, the felony DUI treatment program; the Connections Corrections drug treatment program; and the new Passages programs for women in Billings.

There also are about 250 inmates waiting for room in sex offender treatment programs at Montana State Prison.

When the ability of offenders to move smoothly through the system is hamstrung, the result can be demoralizing for those who have earned the opportunity – and have the desire – to move on to a treatment program or some other less-restrictive setting. We encourage offenders to make progress and improve, yet the lack of adequate capacity in many of our programs prevent them from doing so as quickly as everyone would like.

Obviously, the solution is to expand programs. But that comes with a cost and takes time. We added 169 prerelease beds in the past two years, opened more drug treatment beds

*COLUMN, Page 13*

Cindy Hiner, director of nursing at Montana State Prison, shows lawmakers through the prison infirmary. From left: Pat Gervais, legislative budget analyst; Warden Mike Mahoney; Hiner; Sen. Keith Bales; Rep. Ray Hawk; Rep. Ken Peterson; Rep. Ernie Dutton; and Sen. Jeff Essmann.



# Legislators tour prison, boot camp



Warden Mike Mahoney, back to the camera, began the prison tour outside the administration building. Corrections Department Director Mike Ferriter, far left, accompanied the six legislators. Half of the contingent were members of the joint subcommittee reviewing the department's proposed budget. Also joining the tour were Gayle Lambert, administrator of Montana Correctional Enterprises, and Pam Bunke, administrator of the Adult Community Corrections Division.

Dan Burden, superintendent of the Treasure State Correctional Training Center, and Tony Heaton, program manager, showed legislators the boot camp's barracks during the Jan. 13 tour. The boot camp is located northwest of the state prison.





# Budget

FROM Page 2

fender records to be scanned and available at any work station

*One-time only:*

- ☐ \$2.6 million for interoperable communications
- ☐ \$376,750 for upgrading Montana State Prison's fiber optics network
- ☐ \$285,000 for a new system to handle the commissary, inmate banking and restitution tracking programs
- ☐ \$280,000 for creating an electronic storage and workflow system allowing for entire offender records to be scanned and available at any work station
- ☐ \$274,800 for a staff scheduling system
- ☐ \$54,000 for expanding video conferencing capabilities for inmate court appearances

## 2. Community Corrections

*Ongoing:*

- ☐ \$3.2 million to hire 36 additional probation and parole officers
- ☐ \$2 million to increase payments 2 percent annually to those operating prerelease centers
- ☐ \$1.1 million to contract with private substance abuse counselors working out of probation and parole offices
- ☐ \$394,336 for additional probation and parole administrative staff
- ☐ \$54,164 for overtime at Treasure State Correctional Training Center

## 3. Juvenile Corrections

*Ongoing:*

- ☐ \$1.7 million to replace lost federal funding for juvenile re-entry programs

- ☐ \$662,910 for overtime at Pine Hills and Riverside youth correctional facilities and the Youth Transition Center
- ☐ \$384,000 in increased authority for youth services to accept parental contributions
- ☐ \$306,000 in increased authority for handling donations, interest and income at Pine Hills Youth Correctional Facility
- ☐ \$139,971 for hiring two staff in a school-to-work program at Riverside Youth Correctional Facility
- ☐ \$127,600 to annualize the adjustment in the educator entitlement at youth correctional facilities
- ☐ \$96,312 for offender pay in the youth corrections system
- ☐ \$30,812 for a teacher entitlement increase in the youth correctional facilities
- ☐ \$10,600 to contract with a full-time chaplain for Riverside

*One-time only:*

- ☐ \$161,000 for replacement of safety and security equipment at Pine Hills
- ☐ \$140,000 to replace the 40-year-old gym floor at Pine Hills
- ☐ \$60,100 for replacement of safety and security equipment at Riverside
- ☐ \$50,900 to establish a laundry at Pine Hills
- ☐ \$35,000 for a commercial kitchen at Riverside

## 4. Montana Correctional Enterprises

*Ongoing:*

- ☐ \$1 million in increased spending authority for the prison canteen system
- ☐ \$1 million to maintain current license plate production at Montana State Prison
- ☐ \$241,852 for inmate payroll in the license plate factory and

vocational education program at Montana State Prison

## 5. Secure Care

### Montana State Prison

*Ongoing:*

- ☐ \$2.4 million for overtime
- ☐ \$933,062 to operate the inmate transportation system, including the addition of nine officers
- ☐ \$565,876 for inmate pay
- ☐ \$397,567 to hire three employees for the infirmary and mental health unit

*One-time only:*

- ☐ \$496,503 for supplies and equipment (infirmary, road maintenance, inmate surveillance, GPS tracking, key control, staff safety and security)
- ☐ \$378,500 to replace equipment (conference phone system, computerized key management, food re-heating ovens and vehicles)
- ☐ \$161,223 to maintain an employee transportation program

### Montana Women's Prison

*Ongoing:*

- ☐ \$462,908 for overtime
- ☐ \$319,978 to hire a part-time educator and upgrade education equipment
- ☐ \$135,000 for inmate pay
- ☐ \$134,204 to add two correctional officers

*One-time only:*

- ☐ \$152,915 for security and training equipment

The list does not include three Montana State Prison building projects that will come before the Joint Appropriations Subcommittee on Long-Range Planning this week:

- ☐ \$2.5 million for expansion of the work dorm
- ☐ \$1.9 million for enlarging food service capacity
- ☐ \$1.2 million to upgrade housing units

# Panel boosts rates for regional, Shelby prisons

**By Bob Anez**  
**Communications Director**

Operators of Montana's regional and private prisons would get significant increases in rates paid by the state to house inmates, under the Department of Corrections budget approved by a legislative committee last week.

Dawson, Missoula and Cascade counties, along with Corrections Corp. of America, will get about \$9 million more in payments over the next 2½ years if the budget remains unchanged by the time the 2007 Legislature adjourns in late April.

However, Cascade County may not see any increase, because Sheriff Dave Castle announced that the county has decided to cancel its contract with the state. The decision will force the department to find space for about 150 inmates currently housed in the Cascade County Regional Prison.

The disclosure came as the Joint Appropriations Subcommittee on Corrections and Public Safety completed its work on the department's proposed budget for the next biennium.

Corrections Director Mike Ferriter said he holds out hope that differences between the state and the county still can be resolved, although Castle's statements to the committee indicated the decision already has been made to end the state-county partnership.

The rate changes approved by the subcommittee reflect calculations based on an audit conducted in response a bill passed by the 2005 Legislature. That law told the department to develop a process for determining fair rates to be paid those operating the regional prisons.

The audit results, coupled with new administrative rules, spell out



Castle

how rates are to be determined, taking into consideration such things as correctional officer wages, indirect costs and depreciation. That produced proposed higher rates for the current fiscal year and 2006.

Dawson County would see its daily rate per inmate increase from \$49 to \$56.48, a 15.3 percent change. Missoula County, which operates the Missoula Assessment and Sanction Center, would get a 30 percent increase from \$45.66 to \$59.36. Cascade County would receive the identical increase as Dawson if it changes its mind about contract cancellation.

Although Corrections Corp. of America, which operates Crossroads Correctional Center at Shelby, was not included in the legislation regarding the setting of future rates, the subcommittee approved the 7.5 percent increase requested by the company – from \$45.36 to \$48.76.

In addition, the subcommittee authorized enough money to give all of the operators a 5 percent annual increase in 2008 and again in 2009.

Cascade County, which had argued it deserved an increase to \$61.86 a day, would be paid a rate that is \$1.41 more than that based

on the budget approved by the subcommittee.

Castle, in his presentation to the subcommittee, said his county has been subsidizing the state in operation of the regional prison because he believes the department has not been paying its fair share. He said the county has long faced a "bleeding situation" in its finances as a result of the regional prison.

Castle said his office's tight finances has forced cuts in programs such as the anti-drug campaign known as DARE.

Ross Swanson, deputy warden at Montana State Prison, said the department has adhered to the mandate of the Legislature in developing a fair process for setting appropriate rates to be paid. He told the subcommittee the department has been unable to get the financial information it needs from Cascade County to determine if the rate the county demands is accurate.

"We don't have documentation to support the claim that Cascade County has been subsidizing the state," Swanson said. "The detail needs to be there to support their request."

He noted that the department was able to work out rate adjustments with Dawson and Missoula counties, but not with Cascade County.

Rep. Bill Beck, a Whitefish Republican and subcommittee member, said it appeared that "Cascade County is rebelling and out in left field somewhere."

Rep. Ray Hawk, subcommittee chairman and a Florence Republican, noted the county had failed to provide complete information requested by the department.

Ferriter said no immediate decision has been made about where inmates housed in the Great Falls prison will be moved.



# ARGO -- *The hidden investment*

**By Pat Schwarz**  
**Lead Software Developer**

I tend to think of things in money terms. What does my dollar buy me? When I make major investments, I want to make sure that I am getting my dollars worth and that the money that I spend is not wasted. ARGO is an investment that will revolutionize corrections. It will affect almost every employee, every offender and all the taxpayers of Montana.

So, before I go any further, let me give you some history.

First of all, ARGO is the project to implement the Offender Management Information System, or OMIS. OMIS originally was developed by Utah, and state officials there estimate the value of the system to be more than \$12.5 million.

After the system was developed and Utah had recovered some of its costs, that state made a very forward-thinking decision. It gave the system away to any state wanting it, with the caveat that each user give back any changes made to the system.

To make a long story short, this eventually evolved into a consortium of about 10 states. Utah signed over all rights to the system to the consortium of states for them to manage. Any change to the system made by any member state is made available to all the members for free.

Idaho then took the system that Utah developed and made it web-based, spending about \$2 million on the changes and bringing the system to where it is today.

Now it's time to explain the investment and the return on that investment.

With a single technology contractor's wages ranging from \$100-\$200 per hour, it's very expensive to implement large information systems such as OMIS. A system like OMIS could take dozens of contractors years to produce. And that doesn't count the cost of maintenance.

According to a study done by Research Triangle Institute in 2002, software bugs cost the United States \$59.6 billion. Maintaining software is a large expense for an organization, with most of the software problems found in new products. OMIS already has a majority of those bugs worked out.

Montana's investment into the OMIS system is Department of Corrections staff time and resources. We would need to spend this money regardless of whether OMIS was one of our projects. The staff currently supports, enhances and maintains the department's information system.

Montana's savings are huge. As a member of the consortium, we can leverage technical and business re-

sources of the other member states. These resources are all corrections employees in other states, doing what we do. We also get any future changes and enhancements

that member states make for free. This includes New Mexico's plans to spend over \$1 million in the next year, and Kansas' intentions to spend \$2 million on OMIS.

With OMIS, we also will centralize our files and allow for better data protection. Currently, a large amount of data is kept in pa-



Schwarz

per files. These paper files can be stolen, lost or destroyed. OMIS provides a central repository for all critical information on each offender.

This information is also available via a web browser inside the state firewall and also through a very secure Citrix session anywhere in the world. That means no software to install and maintain on any machine, and information that is available wherever it needs to be.

We will be replacing ACIS and PROFILES – the outdated and cumbersome offender tracking and information systems – with OMIS. We will no longer need to either support the AS400 hardware (for which we pay a maintenance fee) or dedicate staff to the aged legacy system, and can conform more closely to state standards and practices.

There are also tons of savings in the areas of public safety and trust. With better information, we can more rapidly communicate and troubleshoot situations. For example, photos can be extracted within seconds of an escape, as can information on vehicles owned by offenders and their relatives.

In conclusion, OMIS stands to save Montana tens of millions of dollars, now and in the future. OMIS also brings a higher level of public safety and trust, and it all starts with the ARGO project that has the goal of replacing ACIS and PROFILES. This is a new beginning for corrections, truly bringing the agency into the information age.

Those wishing to see a demonstration of the program can contact Anita Pisarsky, project manager, at 444-5510 or Patrick Schwarz at 444-1347.

# FREE Employee Health Screenings

We are very excited to tell you about the great changes we have made to the health screening benefit beginning 2007. Your participation will ensure its success and you can realize some cost savings as well.

- ☐ Health screenings will be held statewide, every year.
- ☐ FREE to all plan members and dependents over age 18
- ☐ By participating in health screenings through the State, you save all co-payments or co-insurance that would apply through your health plan.

The Web site will be updated as dates are scheduled. [www.benefits.mt.gov/healthscreening](http://www.benefits.mt.gov/healthscreening)  
Watch for e-mails at work, your agency newsletters, and flyers. Retirees will receive notification via US Mail.

If you don't have a computer, please call 406-444-3809 or 1-800-287-8266 ext 3809 for help

- ☐ After you receive your confidential health screening results in the mail, simply mail, fax or bring them in to your physician.
- ☐ If you are planning on see your physician\*\* and you know the health screenings are coming up in your area, you can realize cost savings by having the health screening through the State.

\*\*If you choose to get these services done at your physician's office, you will be subject to paying co-payments and co-insurance

## Shape Up Montana

We have chosen Shape Up Montana for the 2007 fitness program.

February 1, 2007 - May 1, 2007 <http://www.bigskygames.org/shapeup/>

### 2006 Shape Up Montana Stats

**3,003 participants**

**304 Activity Teams - Logged 731,126.95 miles -**

**29.4 times around the world!**

**89 Weight Loss teams - Lost 2,653.65 pounds,**

**an average of 5.83 per person!**

Need help to stick to those New Year's resolutions of **weight loss, exercise** and if you are a **smoker, helping you quit smoking by engaging in healthy activity?** Get in shape with Shape Up Montana.

- ☐ Cost, \$5, **\*\*Make sure to check State of Montana employee when registering**
- ☐ Family members can register (you pay their registration)
- ☐ Program is statewide, challenge your friends
- ☐ Shape Up Montana will e-mail you weekly exercises you can do at work or at home.

Volunteers are needed outside of Montana to place SHAPE UP MONTANA flyers and brochures where employees can see them and sign up. 406-444-3809 or [darave@mt.gov](mailto:darave@mt.gov)



## New Employees

EDITOR'S NOTE: This list includes new hires from Nov. 25, 2006 through Jan. 5, 2007, based on personnel records in the central office. If you notice any errors or omissions, please call the *Signpost* editor at (406) 444-0409, or e-mail him at [banez@mt.gov](mailto:banez@mt.gov).

### Montana State Prison

Ryan Anderson  
Lynn Cavanaugh  
Carl Hetrick  
Fredrick Hill  
Johnal Holst  
Cory Hyndman  
Sandra Koch  
Jeanie McCarter  
Christine McGuire  
Sherri Morman  
Cole Neubauer  
April Phelan

### Montana Women's Prison

Peter Big Hair  
Michelle Bisonette  
Ady Geda

### Pine Hills

Kraig Heidemann  
Cassie Puskas

### Probation and Parole

Terra Rohlfs, Hamilton

### Riverside

Jessica Hayes-Cook  
Samantha McClure

### Treasure State

Myron Bennett  
Peter Gilbert  
Tanya LaMere

Montana State Prison, the facility lacks space for more group sessions to be conducted.

In its budget, the department has proposed more chemical-dependency treatment beds and a sex-offender treatment center. We hope they will survive the legislative process.

We're trying to break some of the logjams inherent in corrections. We realize that moving offenders through the system more quickly and giving them more timely access to the treatment they need will benefit them, society and Montana taxpayers in the long run.

## Column

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and expect a pair of methamphetamine treatment centers to open in a few months.

A recent study found that 93 percent of offenders have some sort of substance-abuse problem and 48 percent have mental illness. Statistics show a fourth of the adult male prison population are sex offenders. Matching supply with that demand is a significant challenge.

Even if the money was available to hire additional sex offender therapists at

## Pardons & Parole Board accredited

The American Correctional Association has awarded national accreditation to the Montana Board of Pardons and Parole.

In presenting the three-year award, Robert Garvey, chairman of the Commission on Accreditation, and Gary Maynard, ACA president, praised Executive Director Craig Thomas and other board staff for their professional operation and success in completing the accreditation process.

That process involves a review of the board's organization based on national standards that address services, programs and operations essential to effective correctional management.

Through accreditation, an agency is able to maintain a balance between protecting the public and providing and environment that safeguards the life, health and safety of staff and offenders, ACA said in announcing the award.



### Montana Department of Corrections Mission

*The Montana Department of Corrections enhances public safety, promotes positive change in offender behavior, reintegrates offenders into the community and supports victims of crime.*

## Signpost Deadlines

<u>Deadline</u>	<u>Edition</u>
March 31.....	Spring
June 30.....	Summer
Sept. 30.....	Fall
Dec. 15.....	Winter

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